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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1914

SCIENCE AND PRACTISE¹

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THE Society of Naturalists at this meeting celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, an occasion which in itself perhaps calls for no special felicitation, but one on which we should all rejoice on account of the safe passing of a crisis in its life. Not many years ago its very existence was threatened, and now the society finds itself securely established for a definite purpose. Conceived by its founders as a means to bring together workers in biology for the discussion of topics of common interest, it was confronted almost at the outset by a condition in which there appeared to be no such topics, so rapidly did the organization of more special societies from its midst take place. It seemed as if its career were to be that of the ephemerid, a sacrifice to its own fecundity. Ultimately, however, as a result of an experiment suggested by the late Professor Penhallow, when president of the society, a process of regeneration took place, not an exact restitution of all that had been lost by autotomy, but rather a sort of heteromorphic growth, which, while preserving the old shell, transformed the main functional activity of the organism to a new sphere, specialized but nevertheless having much common ground of interest. It is particularly appropriate that the society should have taken up the field of genetics as its own, for what has its career been but one long persistent effort in practical eugenics? Though its early experiences did seem to resemble a self-destroying schizogony, we now look upon

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

¹ Address of the president of the American Society of Naturalists, Philadelphia, 1913.